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After recapitulating certain problems with current conceptions of the profession of adult education and stating a design problem for the reinvention of the field, this paper argues that adult education can best be seen as "self-education." A beginning definition and concept of that term is described, along with a model and supporting guides for conducting self-education. The paper concludes with an examination of why the profession of adult education would be founded more soundly on this basis than upon its current assumptions. (Author/KC)

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SELF-EDUCATION: THE FOUNDING OF ADULT EDUCATION--PART II

The second of two papers

presented at the Convention
of the
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by

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SELF-EDUCATION: THE FOUNDING OF ADULT EDUCATION - PART II

Abstract

After recapitulating certain problems with current conceptions of the profession of adult education, and stating a design problem for the reinvention of the field, the paper argues that adult education can best be seen as self-education. A beginning definition and concept of that term is described, along with a model and supporting guides for conducting self-education. The paper concludes with an examination of why the profession of adult education would be founded more soundly on this basis than upon its current assumptions.

INTRODUCTION

In a preliminary paper, the issue was examined of what question(s) adult educators answer when they offer formal definitions of adult education. It was found that they do not typically seek to answer the question: "should a social object called adult education come into existence, and if so, how would one go about inventing such an object?" Rather, they seem to answer the question: "Assuming that adult education already exists and that we are already practicitioners of it, what is the best political conceptualization of the boundries of what we are doing?" Since the formal definitions of adult education leave out the issue of original invention, an unstated, pre-existing, uncontrolled, tacit definition of adult education becomes the 'actual' common definition of the profession. This tacit definition is nothing more than a vague, commonsense presumption that adult education references any situation in which adult learning is understood to be going on, a situation in which some adults are understood to be facilitating learning for other adults. Therefore, anyone who can be said to facilitating other adults' learning is an adult educator. That is what adult educators seem to mean when they say they are adult educators before they gain through practice an interest in formally defining the term. But this default definition is upon close examination neither obvious or necessary, and stems in complex ways from the historical claims and absurdities of children's education. The consequence is that adult education becomes a captive of children's education, gives up the chance for an ethics of its own, loses political power, comes to confuse theory with ideology, and loses the chance to be a strong, disciplined, independent, accumulative, scientific and artistic profession.

The previous paper ended with an attempt to design the 'design problem' to which adult education, when invented, would be an answer. In general, the stated design problem was how to invent a universal, powerful, logical, ethical, respected, consulted, and effective scientific and artistic profession of adult education? Given this design problem, the following definition was

offered as a possible answer:

> Adult education is each and every adult's intentional efforts at self-education, alone and with others, in all human situations, including occasions where the self-educator is officially facilitating the learning efforts of other self-educators.

A close examination of the design problem and this definitional answer will show that it too, if nothing more is added, is just another example of what I have called a 'second formal' definition'. It's only special virtue is that it clarifies the particular political issues it seeks to answer. To go farther, in its justification and elaboration, it is necessary to go into the roots of the 'tacit definition' it seeks to replace. Specifically, it is necessary to invent a definition of education. Ironically, it is precisely the meaning of 'education' that formal definitions of adult education unconsciously and uncritically inherit and implicitly accept.

Therefore, this paper will attempt to achieve two objectives: First, it will justify the definition of adult education as self-education, both as a philosophic statement and as a response to the design problem stated above. Secondly, it will apply the definition to practice by offering a concept, method, and process for conducting self-education. The overall aim is for the reader to attain an understanding of the power of the definition and some sense of how to conduct self-education oneself.

It is part of my argument that adult education is a humanity and not a social science. While acting as an objective scientist produces a good amount of useful knowledge, the greater effect is to submerge the identify of the person behind the role, thus preventing further self-development. We, after all, are not studying rocks and trees, but our very selves. At the beginning of Walden, Henry Thoreau, arguably one of America's foremost adult educators, makes the point this way:

> "In most books, the I, or first person, is omitted; in this it will be retained; that, in respect to egotism, is the main difference. We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were any body else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately,

> I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience. Moreover, I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me. Perhaps these pages are more particularly addressed to poor students. As for the rest of my readers, they will accept such portions as apply to them. I trust that none will stretch the seams in putting on the coat, for it may do good service to him whom it fits." (Thoreau, 1983, pp. 45 - 46)

This quote follows immediately after the clarion call used by the author to head his book:

> "I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up." (p. 45)

I do not cite these quotes as a pretense for telling my life story, but rather as an explanation of why the mood and tense of the paper changes as the writing proceeds. While the paper starts out addressing an 'objective' reader, it ends by addressing a 'self-educating subject.' Where it starts by addressing a reader of 'social science' and 'philosophy,' it ends up addressing an intensely alive human being, a reader of 'literature.' Just as one may go as far as one's imagination and courage permit to find the personal meaning of literature, so nothing limits the possibilities for being self-educating. This means that one reader may not understand what is said here, while another reader may be able to take the words deep into the mystery of self and the practices of self-overcoming. Such differences in reading are appropriate and to be expected. However, such differences should not be treated automatically as a fault of the writer and the writing. When adult education is treated as a social science, a utilitarian standard of clear, dispassionate, writing is appropriate; when it is considered a humanity, the standard of understanding shifts ever more to the reader.

WHAT IS IT TO INVENT EDUCATION?

After these many years of written history and civilized nation states, there are large numbers of extant instances of programs called adult education and definitions of the two words

involved. If one were asked to define the term, a natural method -- which we all have followed to our benefit innumerable times in school -- is to look it up in the dictionary, collect samples from expert practitioners and scholars who have used the term, think about these definitions and, thus prepared, phrase one's own. Put that way, defining 'adult education' or 'adult' and 'education' seems to involve the exact same process as might be used to define a 'rock' or a 'tree.' But it is of the upmost importance to see that defining 'education' is wholly unlike defining a 'rock' or a 'tree,' so that the sensed appropratenes of using the same process in fact involves an unrecognized political choice.

This can be understood most easily if one imagined a fictional time in the history of humanity **before** the words 'rock,' 'tree,' or 'adult education' existed, and attempted to reconstruct how one would go about bringing names and definitions into existence. What is quickly realized is that the objects which come to be named and defined as 'trees' and 'rocks' require naming -- such objects are 'really there' to bump into, hit you, stub one's toes on, and thus force you to name them. While the sounds and actual names given as symbols may be arbitrary and relative to linquistic systems, the named objects can be said to be **discovered**, because they are 'really there.' Not so with 'education,' nothing is there as an object to be 'discovered.' Rather, education must be 'invented.'

Inventing 'education' is then a form of architecture, identical to the mental design and building of a house or cathedral, and very different from discovering and naming physical objects. To invent education is to imagine and then through action 'realize' in 'material' culture an answer to an envisioned design problem. Therefore, if I were to seek to define education through a discovery method, such as by consulting a dictionary and studying extant definitions, I would at worst end up conforming unthinkingly to an existing authority or tradition, and would at best retrace a route of earlier invention.

This establishes that education is necessarily an invention, never a discovery. What then is inventing education like? What would be a 'design problem' that would occasion or necessitate the invention of 'education?' What, when invented, would make 'education' a best or preferred solution compared to its competitors, if it has competitors?

Inventing Education and Inventing Social Worlds

If one considers the great inventors of the definition of education, Plato and his Republic, Rousseau and his Social Contract, Dewey and his Democracy, for examples, it becomes breathtakingly evident that their defining activity drew on all of their knowledge and included, as what I take to be a necessary step, the inventing of a vision of the good society. One could describe education as the sort of thing one defines last, after thinking through all that one knows, and, like a dying grandparent, envisioning the ideal social world one would like to create and leave for one's grandchildren.

This grand view furnishes a useful clue to students when the exercise is resumed of inventing education in my fictional, primitive, pre-education society. What could be learned is that in order to invent education one must first discover and construct the design problem to which education, when invented, would be the best design solution. The exact clue seems to be that constructing the design problem is somehow related to creating a vision of the ideal society, call it the social contract, the republic, democracy, civilization, nation, state, global society or whatever other collective representation you might choose for the "all that is valuable."

Put this way, the problem appears to be life and death, and of these two, mostly death -- if we allow ourselves the momentary illusion of its severability from life. If the living lived forever, in a world without death, then their acquired knowledge, competence, and wisdom would be eternally available to continue the good society, the society of their dreams. If they were healthy and could do the work, they might not even feel a need to pass on this knowledge and skill to the

newly born, those little loveable creatures, but now unneeded nuisances and potential competitors.

But we are born, do die, and know nothing. Therefore, the problem universally arises as to how the elder generation are to pass on the all that is valuable, minus the evil they would like to overcome to the next generation given the fact that there will be one hundred percent turnover in personnel every century or so. Thus, the design problem to be addressed is one of transport and continuance, including the maintainance, adaptation, and growth of culture. A succinct summary of the problem might be, "how do the living efficiently transport culture across generations given the fact of their death?" That is the question to which education, as one answer, is invented -- most would say as decidedly the best answer.

As an answer, education has most powerfully and efficiently meant the bringing forth of personal being through understanding. This means most importantly that the transfer of knowledge in the transport of culture is through the exercise of learner judgment, the learner saying in effect "I understand the reasons and principles behind the lessons and knowledge my teachers, the elder surrogates, teach." (Scheffler, 1973, pp. 67-81) Understanding, which might be most robustly defined as thinking thoughts through, so that they become one's own,is more efficient than the competitors of education, which Peirce cogently termed other ways of "fixing belief" - namely, reward and punishment, fear, shame, guilt, anxiety, manipulation, reverence for authority, love of parents, and the like. (Peirce, 1955, pp. 5-22.) Education is more efficient than socializaton, the generic term which includes all of the other ways of fixing belief, because it frees the spirited thinker as a thoughtful, powerful, responsible agent, and thus citizen of a valued society. Unlike socialization, education produces a free, thoughtful person rather than a habituated stiff.

If we could say, for analogy, that the design problem and solution which education

represents is similar to the problem of moving the sphinx, a symbol of the mysterious "all that is valuable," out of harms way, before the flood caused by a newly built dam submerges and destroys it, then we can see that a deconstruction, transport, instruction, and reconstruction plan will be needed, as the curriculum of a school represents, and that the most efficient reconstruction theory would be through the development of personal being, the coming forth of a thoughtful, understanding person-citizen to stand under the culture.

Adults in the Invention of Education

At this point, it would be possible to have an extensive discussion of the other word that concerns us, by for example noting that unlike the word 'education', 'adult' is fundamentally a discovery -- everyone matures and grows up -- that yet the definition of 'adult' is relative to culture, and that there are a variety of chronological ages used in different societies to peg the arrival of 'adult status.' All of this suggests that defining an adult is a tough but necessary intellectual problem.

But I see no crucial problem in these facts. The much more cogent fact is that the concept of 'adulthood,' however it otherwise varies by culture, is already built into the meaning of education. Adulthood is a central, inescapable concern to any inventor of education, and a necessary inclusion in constructing and solving the design problem to which education is the best solution. The elders, faced with death, invent education of the young with the precise aim that they become adults. The way the problem is solved is to make 'adulthood,' despite its varying cultural meanings,' the aim of education. Education is the process of transmitting the culture, through the development of personal being, so that children become 'adult.'

Since 'adult' is subsumed within the concept of education, it is potentially confusing to create a term like 'adult education,' since it creates a double reference. A reader might think that some new meaning of education is intended, where the earlier, classical meaning of adulthood is

dropped or overridden by a different meaning. But, as I have demonstrated in the first paper, there is only one meaning of education, which necessarily includes the goal of leading to adulthood, and that 'adult' as an adjective has precisely the same status as 'special', 'vocational,' and 'elementary' as modifiers of education. In short, 'adult' must reference a kind of learner, namely one who is granted the civil status of being an adult, instead of a child or adolescent. It tells us fundamentally that the student is of an age to be treated as a voluntary agent.

Why Self-Education as Adult Education?

If the only legitimate way out of the two adulthood reference problem is to conclude that 'adult' in the phrase 'adult education' is restricted to the legal and social status of the learner, as not being a child or an adolescent, so that the goal of education, for these adults as for children, is still to bring forth one's adulthood, then we can see that the 'goal of adulthood' within the concept of education includes issuing forth a truer, better self, a more responsible adulthood than one previously admitted and owned.

Put this way, it can be argued that what is changed is that the person, now a legal adult, has taken over from other adults, from the faculty if you will, the responsibility of becoming oneself, the ideal self that one is capable of imagining and willing. Thus, I take adult education to start with oneself in the symbolic act of graduation from faculty control and in the commencement of the process of acting as faculty in relation to one's own self as product. This makes for a universal discipline since all adults would be included in this universe and it establishes the profession of adult education on the conceptual point that we remain self-educators as the means of facilitating other adults' learning, each of them being considered a self-educator as well. With that general idea, I turn now to a more extended definition of what self-education means.

A SPINNING JENNY FOR STAYING IN SCHOOL ONCE OUT OF SCHOOL

For beginners, I mean by self-education something precise, mechanical, and arbitrary: the conscious, intentional regimen of interrupting one's personal experience and determining to learn something from it through a procedure that involves placing oneself imaginatively in the status of educator. As children, and for too long thereafter, we are asked to be learner-pupils to other educators' lessons. If, in order to claim our adulthood, we must graduate from precisely this captured form of education, then the commencement ceremony I favor is one of claiming, from then on, the educator status in relation to one's own self as learner. Self-education is the practice of reflecting upon experience to insure that one learns something from it. Taking the standpoint of the educator and learner simultaneously with the taking of all the other standpoints that living requires is my means of insuring that reflection and learning happens. The point is to learn even in situations where one does not usually learn, indeed in situations where one previously has not wanted to learn at all. If this is self-education, then adult education can be defined as each and every adult's intentional efforts at self-education, or even better (since conscious intent is included in both definitions,) adult education is self-education.

To say to adults: "Learn! Force yourself by identifying with the educator status!" does not say: "Be your own teacher." I have in mind rather a notion of educator closer to the executive role in an educational system, the Principal, Superintendent, Dean, or Provost. This location of the educator status is meant to recognize that a person can not be one's own teacher, a role which should be reserved for others to perform in bringing the world to the individual. The educator standpoint, in my meaning, is more of a status under which is imaginatively located a set of sequential roles which together, in application, constitute a learning cycle. Each cycle is a learning project in an agenda of spiralling projects making up the curriculum we call life. In this paired educator-learner dialogue, the roles, as I imagine them in sequence, are: the evaluator-researcher who requires me to review and sum up the facts of my existence thusfar, to

that moment; the legislator-judge who decides what I know and value, what ends to seek, what routes and rules to follow, and what I need to learn next; the program developer who constructs my next intentional learning program in relation to these values and ends; the supervisor of teachers who searches for, selects, and supports the teacher(s) needed to deliver this program; and finally, the evaluator-reseacher, who appears once again to evaluate the outcomes of this learning project and to commence the cycle anew.

I call this model of self-education a "mechanical spinning jenny" because it mechanically incorporates the hated machine language of the factory model of schooling - goals, objectives, programme - into an inner model of forced learning. As a familiar alien - familiar because we all went to school, alien because no one would come naturally to want to follow this regimen - the model makes the insistent point: learn, learn, learn, until better alternative grounds are found for learning on one's own. I mean it to be thought of as a 'forced freedom model;' it imprisons learning in a mental school in the interests of forcing the person to become free. In our freedom, it insists that we continue to learn in a responsible way that the faculty would approve, in a way that will enhance rather than evade the responsibilities of citizenship. In a later section, I will suggest how this freedom finds itself naturally in learning and how this mechanical model, in use, melts away to be replaced by the person's own language for the same learning sequence.

SELF-EDUCATION IS NOT SELF-DIRECTED, LIFELONG LEARNING

Self-education is indebted to the concepts of self-directed and lifelong learning, with which it holds much in common. These commonalities include self-direction, the concept of a learning project, an agenda of learning projects, a spiralling, progressive process of learning, learning to learn skills, and continuous, life-long learning. In these respects, my own work is indebted to the work of Knowles, Tough, Gross, Houle, Brookfield, and many others. Yet, it is important to see that self-education is not equivalent to the going definitions of either

self-directed learning or lifelong learning. In fact, the concept of self-education is constructed to subsume those two ideas and to precisely overcome their deficits.

As I understand the definition of a self-directed lifelong learner in adult education literature, its standards are met if one: A.) has inner motivation to learn; B.) has attitudes and practices favorable to learning C.) takes intentional charge of learning; D.) selects learning goals for one's own learning; E.) develops learning projects to achieve those goals; F.) develops a mental agenda of such learning projects; G.) is a continual learner; and H.) sees oneself as learning everyday and throughout life. In short, a self-directed lifelong learner is over a lifetime a motivated, enthusiastic, continual, independent learner.

Self-education subsumes all of these above-noted identifiers of self-directed, lifelong learning with two additions, one accidental and ornamental and the other crucial. To call the first accidental and ornamental means that it could just as well have been stated to dress out the definition of self-directed, lifelong learning without having to invent a concept of self-education. To say that the second is crucial is to claim that it is the reason to invent a concept of self-education.

In relation to the accidental and ornamental addition, it is that a self-educator must not only be a continuous learner, with at least one learning project in process at all time, but that this learner must be a broad, general, I would like to say omnivorous learner. In short, all domains of living are open to learning at any and all times in life, not just some domains. By this criterion, for example, one is not a self-educator if one is merely a sustained, continuous, enthusiastic, wide-open learner around ones work, or any other single domain of living. One must be a learner in relation to all domains and subjects. Or clearer, there is no subject mentally locked up as off-base for learning, no subject where a person says: "I know this forever; I'm certain; I need never reconsider." While a person can only study one topic at a time, all domains of living must be seen

as possible learning arenas to merit the title self-educator for its author.

The crucial addition has to do with the concept of self. In self-directed learning, attention has been focused mainly on the question: "Is this person self-directing?" The very question focuses the issue on the status of the executive self, the self in charge of saying: "This is my learning Agenda;" "These are my goals:" "This is my immediate need;" "This is what I want to learn;" "This is the way I want to learn it; and, "This is why I want to learn." If there is a determined executive self who takes charge of learning in these ways, that has been sufficient, along with the other characteristics cited, to say: "S/he's a self-directed learner."

As contrasted with this view of self, self-education claims that the self which emerges as the produce of education, out of the learning project, should be the focus of our concerns, not the executive self who commences and directs the learning. I would like to return here to my claim that an evil man, such as Hitler represented, could meet the definition of a self-directed lifelong learner if that definition merely asks for an enthusiastic, take charge, focused learner. Less dramatically, I am suggesting that the executive self that you and I understand ourselves to be may be similarly misquided, sick, lost, or evil. Therefore, the intent behind our next learning project may be diseased. If the point of education is made to be the validation of this poorly intentioned, executive self, learning can only continue and increase problems, for the person and for others. The self of education is not then primarily the ego that wishes to guide learning but the self emerging from the learning. This self is the produce led forth - induced, deduced, reduced, adduced, and finally educed - in education.

Thus, the importance of taking the status-role of educator is to provide each adult with a 'companion executive self' to check and hopefully overcome the too certain, habituated executive self our ego claims for us now. The job of this companion is to give real selfhood some chance of emerging out from under the false certainty which hides it now. Self-education is the forced

education of the directing, dictating self to free a truer, better self.

THE SELVES OF SELF-EDUCATION AND EDUCATION AS THE STANDPOINT ON STANDPOINT

If Self is a unity, its oneness is in the interaction of two parts, which following G. H. Mead we might as well call two selves. I will call these the observer and observed self. These selves are seen clearly in any personal description: I am tall; I am talented; I am sick. There is a self who makes those statements, the observer, and a self who is talked about, the observed. The extreme case of their difference and alienation is seen in suicide, where the observer self, acting as police, prosecutor, judge, juror, and executioner, condemns an observed self for some unpardonable offense. It matters little that these selves have only one body to go around; that body serves adequately to have committed the crime and to exact the sentence. Mead took a useful step in calling the observed self the acting self, or "I", and the observer self the social self or "Me", the unity of self existing in an I-Me dialogue. These distinctions tell us that selfhood is a point of view. In sheer, passionate living, the organism merely acts, the I existing in the action, thoughtless, without reflection. Then, using language, the Me or observer self stops the action and reflects back upon this activity, assessing it, judging it, adding up lessons. Mead tells us that the reflective activity of the social-observer self is historically associated with the rules, attitudes, and expectations of social entities whose culture and language have been previously learned. Thus, our social selves tend to equate to social roles and group affiliations, identifications as diverse and numerous as the groups we know or can imagine. In observing one's acting self and in seeking to guide it, one is but imaginatively taking the standpoint of social collectivities, if only for their temporary utility, and enforcing expectations on personal conduct from their point of view. Self and Society are twinborn and the way we observe our selves

expresses our societal affiliations.

From this portrait I wish to emphasize the Shakespearean and sociological point that the world is but a stage and we its actors. Social life is fiction made real, consisting in the theatres, stages, props, scripts, and routines which make up the culture of groups. Each group, a theatre, brings with it a cultural standpoint including the names and identities of the selves one can enact on that stage. To be a self in any such group requires taking the standpoint of that reference group and using it as observer self to inform and guide the acting self in that company.

Look at what the prescription: "Be an educator! Be a learner! Be an educator of self" means in this theatrical context. Does it not say, in effect, "take a double standpoint," the standpoint of the roles required for action on that stage and also, at the same time, the standpoint of educator and learner in order to insure that something is learned from the experience of that performance. Educator-learner, in other words, become super and supra observer selves to get outside of and observe not only the actions of the body but also the mental actions of the observer selves one is using in that immediate company. Thus, education is recommended as the standpoint on standpoint. This means that taking the standpoint of the educator-learner role pair is prescribed side-by side with the taking of every other social standpoint one ever takes on self and world.

If this be alienation of self from action, it is alienation of the finest kind, a thoughtfulness which makes life school and action experimental. It instructs us not so much that societal behavior is unimportant or unenagaging, but that it can become, through blind habit, deadly serious. To take the standpoint of education toward all of our other standpoints promises to restore playfullness, mystery, and magic to center stage. To sentence oneself to school commits the actor to live thought, not skeptical despair. If the issue of modern man is never-ending, sinkhole skepticism, depression, radical despair, then education can be claimed to be

the one alienative standpoint which promises remedy, promises, that is, to lead forth humanity beyond despair. Education by being the standpoint on standpoint is the path beyond modernism.

THE NATURE OF SELF-EDUCATION

Plato raises the question in the Meno of how a person is to find virtue when s/he doesn't know what it is, how a person is to learn the all that is valuable when s/he doesn't know what is valuable. That question becomes the one which might fairly be asked of my little spinning jenny, the recommended first course for taking standpoint on standpoint and commencing self-education. If the egoistic, narcissistic self directing my current learning projects is sick, lost, evil, or misquided, how can its taking the standpoint of educator ever lead to personal fitness and social justice? How can diseased intent lead forth good intent? How can the lost become found through this type of mechanical compass?

Well, I must admit I don't know since not knowing is still, more than two millenia after Socrates, the indispensible posture for real learning. This stance recommends to itself the posture of educator called for in my model of self-education. But, beyond that I want to claim, ever so temporarily, that a self-education cycle, one turn of reflection upon experience, leads forth a sentiment of a truer self, a self on a trail to justice.

What I have termed a mechanical spinning jenny for self-education corresponds in our minds to the natural experience of mentally interrupting ongoing thoughtless behavior and saying, in effect, "oops, what was I doing or seeing just now?" This interruption leads to a circle of reflection which includes some lesson such as "I see what's happening, this is the case, I guess I should go on in this way," and then thoughtless action, returned to habit, proceeds again until once again interrupted by the next "what's happening now?" Is this not the sequence of thought and action which Dewey described so well to the world?

So this natural conscious learning cycle exists. What I have done is insist on mental toughness using the stern language of the schoolmaster. "Slow that cycle down." "Right after interrupting yourself do comprehensive research." "Next be a Kantian legislator and judge." "Now identify the lifelong sequence of learning projects which follows from your research and legislation." "Now search for the best teachers!" What this educationalism is meant to do is stretch thought all the way to philosophy. It asks people to take their little interruptive moments all the way to rethinking all of their statements, rethinking everything they say, about everything including nothing. It insists that little interruptions can lead to big insights and infinite wonder.

If I am the teacher then, I advocate using my little mechanical mental torture machine to become a flat-out, general, all-questionning learner. As an antidote to mental laziness and habitual thought, it recommends radical, total scepticism, in the spirit of Rene' Descartes, in order to capture the sure doubter in ourselves, metamorphosized into the questionner, the searcher, and the pilgrim. Out of doubt will come in this fashion the return of the curious, wondering, excited child in us, the eternal learner, and the mysterious, magical, delightful world.

But that promise is not needed to get started or to enjoy the delights of self-education. Intermediate to that promise is the immediate discovery that language, any language, includes innumerable words for naming the same sequence of steps named by my mechanical model of self-education. For example, take the words: pose, impose, depose, repose, or their counterparts position, imposition, deposition, reposition. They describe a cycle of saying, interruption, reflection, and resaying. Thus, they constitute within the english language an alternative to my language. They consitute a natural curriculum. Similarly, invoke, vocalize, vocation, evoke, and revoke are a metaphorical cycle as are verse, converse, averse, inverse and reverse. There are hundreds of examples of 'natural' educational cycles of this sort, word courses available for circling self and world to educe personal metamorphosis.

The issue of self-education, seen as the problem of the self-directed inducing of ourselves to educe a finer and better self from our learning projects, reduces to: "How do I listen to what I am saying in order to interrupt myself and allow aesthetic and ethical choice?" I think the answer to that is the listening for honest emotion, which I take to be the fruit of the clash of life themes.

EMOTIONS TO MOTS: THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

If as I listen to myself talk, in the course of an I-Me educational dialogue, I attend to the feeling of words, the feeling associated with my words, I will come to recognize that these feeling themselves invite naming. I am saying as an educational project, from the educator's catbird chair, "what do my words feel like to me as I say them and what name can I give to those feelings." Sentiment is the sediment of my sayings inviting me to name it (them?) in so many words. Sentiments threaten to become emotions and become mots (words) that are talked about as I talk. Emotion, following the classic work of Alexander Shand, are blocked actions making themselves evident. Thus, in seeking to learn how to interrupt myself, I attend to the base floor of sentiment that is 'swelling up' or 'emoting' in me as I talk and converse. I recognize in this swelling up an 'invite' to interrupt myself and commence a second learning project, and then of course a third, fourth, and fifth learning project. This second learning project is one that begins with the naming of that emotion and asking: "what learning experience does it induce?" In giving birth of that emotion and learning project, what self does it educe?" As I listen to the excitement coming to consciousness in my own words, I interrupt myself to recognize here, right now, that education is a birthing metaphor, the metaphor on metaphor, and that introduce, duce, induce, reduce, educe, conduce, adduce, and their associates are a natural educational curriculum in the womb of language. Following the natural trail of emotions, words in the making, to my next learning project(s) creates educational circles within circles in the curriculum of my life. I have found myself, my soul, in and through this Mandala in the heart of language. The trail of emotions leads

to my voice. This trail promises to lead me to an understanding of what I am saying when I talk.

SELF-EDUCATION AS PRACTICAL MATTER

All language is metaphorical, all saying is translation and transformation, conversation is metamorphosis. Talking is education, or else, it is not.

But if the promise of language to a self-educating person is to find one's words in the words one is saying right then, a practical place is needed to begin. Here is one practical set of rules for a commencement ceremony:

1. You are in your sayings. So talk! and listen to yourself talk!

2. Say anything honestly and you are naming the situation and standing of your self.

3. Take a stream of your sayings and write them down with care as what you say about something. Be comprehensive and complete in your statement. You will know that you have finished when you're satisfied, the body talking. Right?

4. Read the protocol, underlining the sentences that contain belief statements, i.e. statements which make claims to truth. List or number these belief statements.

5. Now examine the listed or numbered statements for the amount of certainty each contains. Label each one either a "finisher" or a "commencer." A finisher is any statement that is claimed to be so certain or finished that it requires no rethinking or refinement. Nothing follows from it as a learning project. Finishers stop learning in the direction of the subject it addresses. A "commencer" is a statement which is sufficiently uncertain or unrefined as to invite 'going on' into some new learning project(s). It commences new learning projects.

6. Now attend to the commencers. Name for each one in short sentences the names of the learning project(s) it suggests to you and invites you to undertake.

7. Now look at the "finishers". What you're asked to do is to convert each one from a finisher to a commencer by making the certain uncertain. Do this by attending to the emotion that lies behind and under each finisher, usually a fear. By attending to the "fear" behind your finishers, ask what invitation that fear presents to you. Taking the fear behind each finisher as an invitation to become fearless, identify in short sentences the learning projects these fears suggest to you for their overcoming.

8. Now make a combined list of these old and newly liberated commencers, candidates all for a next learning project and for a series of such projects.

9. Now let the legisator-judge in you assume the catbird chair to examine, prioritize, evaluate, select and craft, a valuable agenda of learning projects from this list, reframing as necessary.

10. Now let the program planner take over to design and undertake the first learning project on the list. Select your teachers. Now, commence the project, always prepared to interrupt yourself, once underway, as soon as your words inspire you to do so. Be sure to note your finishers and commencers along the way. In other words, be sure to complete the cycle.

11. Follow that trail of interruptions and inspiration freely to the joy of self and to eudaemonia, the happiness which presents itself to those who live a life fit for a human being.

ALPHA AND OMEGA: WHERE DOES SELF-EDUCATION BEGIN AND END

If the promise of self-education is literally to receive the gift of happiness, the benefit Aristotle prophecies for real education, that dream should be sufficient to lead us on. Yet the hard of heart may require a more secular lure. For those I would claim that self-education leads through circular 'interruption' and 'eruption' to the restoration of words. Self-overcoming invites the metamorphosis of words from the crass, single, utilitarian meanings they hold in public for us now to the rich, multiple, metaphoric meanings they once held, could hold again, and could unleash. To ask us to interrupt habitual thought for reflection is tantamount to inviting us to become better readers of the world, in the service of becoming better writers. Thus, our great concern and commitment as adult educators to help people read and write is the appropriate goal of our own self-education and remains our best wish and hope for the world. Self-education as metaphor sees the problem and promise of adult education as discovering the author of ourselves in our creation by reading the creation of the world ever more accurately.

But then, I did it again. I admit for myself the hint that self-education, in its attention to "the word," logos, promises participation in divinity and restoration of creation. As my friend and colleague Michael Brady has taught me, following the poet Rilke, "Follow your Bliss." In doing that one uncovers and recovers the enthusiasm of the God within, one's daemon or other self-fashioned deity.

A RETURN TO ADULT EDUCATION AS PROFESSION

Assuming that the forgoing word-shower paints a sufficient first picture of the concept, process, and promise of self-education, I return now to the defense of a profession of adult education which founds itself on the claim of self-education. Here are the reasons which seem convincing to me.

First, it is the adults not the children who are screwing up the world. It is silly as well as irresponsible to claim that children and unborn generations should be the ones to save us from the garbage that we adults are dumping on the globe. If adults and our education are the problem, then learning to overcome our current adult selves is the most important task of education. Adult education is the most needed form of education.

Second, it is as often and more often the so-called 'educated adults' who are generating most of the garbage. We can't blame the problems of the world on those who have no resources or power. To recognize adult education as self-education creates a "universal" profession which includes and welcomes all adults and insists that a human being is either self-educating or, if not, they are to that extent dead, that is living dead. This universal adult of adult education is every adult, the people who we now call functionally illiterate, the educated illiterate, and the completely literate. Education never ends.

This approach gets rid of silly or prissy meanings of the word 'adult,' having to do with whether folks are mature enough to be in our company, and admits all humans who anyone else will grant the civil right to be an adult, in our country all of those 18 or over. Adult education is the education of all adults, the more the merrier.

Third, this universal adult educator is an equal and colleague of other adults, each one a fellow educator. Moral superiority is never claimed or implied. Since the presumed first rule is: "Be a learner," and the presumed first role is to become the 'educator of self,' an essential equality exists at the practice level, even when in situated roles which permit differential powers and rights. This first role and rule is always present in, rather than replaced by, any other role. Thus one is fundamentally a learner and self-educator when being administrator, teacher, counselor, or researcher to others. Adult education is the co-inquiry of self-educators, even when teaching others. This means that adult education is always voluntary, never mandatory, and that

the learner is always in charge.

Fourth, the professing that adult education is self-education founds that profession on a new myth to which all newcomers may contribute, thereby replacing the kind of male, smokehouse, priesthood notion of a closed profession, the learned body, to which others must be excluded, trained, and then 'inititated.' For example, such a myth might include the professions: "We're the only profession one can get into without an invitation;" We're the only profession that can be practiced anyplace, anytime;" "We're a horizontal profession cutting across all the other professions;" "We're a profession you can join without having to give up the profession you're in;" "We're a completely voluntary profession with no power or standing beyond the powers of compassion and reason;" "We're a feminine profession that seeks to give birth to education;" We're the only profession where you're your own first client;" "We're a profession of artists, scientists, and craftspeople;" "We're the only profession where the best place to begin is in creative ignorance and uncertainty," etc. I have taken these ideas from the students in my classes who have suggested them as foundations for their own self-education. If an initiation ceremony is desired to adult education, a productive one would be to contribute to, and thereby recreate, such a list of professions. I call this a newcomer mythology of adult education.

Fifth, this view of the profession of adult education does not exclude or eject anyone who now claims to be an adult educator, nor does it reject their practice. It does not ask adults to come into conflict with each other. Rather it asks each person to come into a school of self-contradiction, to resolve self. Hopefully, the promised unity of thought beyond contradiction will improve public dialogue and diction, and reverse the way we talk to and about one another.

Sixth, this view returns ethics and values to the center of the curriculum without mandatory imposition. Self-education is the voluntary privilege of being alive and is as fundamentally what we owe ourselves as it is a responsibility of citizenship. My chosen enemy is

dead culture, learned patterns of behavior continued without understanding, large learned icebergs on the soul. Unreflected upon culture is no friend of humanity, but its very enemy, by reason of its status as off-base to questionning, reflection, and decision-making - off-base to learning by believers. For culture to be alive and our nurturer, it must be alive in the soul. We must be learners of all that, instead of ones who hide in the false certainty of defending unthought through ideas. The exact measure of the failure of real adult education is the willingness of men to fight for ideas they will not think about or discuss. One of the most depressing spectacles of our own public adulthoods is the grim certainty with which so many adults proudly proclaim their political ideology as conservatives or liberals. In those wild claims, we are neither.

If you are wondering whether I include institutionalized religion, politics, and personal philosophies under the "big dead learned icebergs of the soul" I answer yes, yes, yes. If in that you conclude that my hope is that religion, politics and personal philosophizing will go away through self-education, I answer no, no, no. My claim is rather that by reopening all domains of thought to learning, religion, politics, and personal philosophy will be recreated. We will come to understand our subjectivity in those subjects better. Self-education is I believe the rebirth of citizenship and religion. Self-education restores ethics because in insisting on the thinking through of all we know it restores ethos and polis. Self-education is, drawing on my own reading of Plato, the public redesign of the public, the rebirth of the public, the re-public of the Republic.

Seven, this view generates a need for tremendous amounts of research and the development of practice tools and skills. Once we withdraw from the notion that the self in charge of self-directed learning is the self we serve and focus instead on the self which emerges from learning, we not only inherit all of philosophy and psychology, but we inherit as well the total problem of knowledge and the eternal mystery of universe and self. We also inherit the problem of helping ourselves and each other bring forth self. Indeed we inherit the problem of what is knowledge and how to acknowledge ourselves in the world. If that is the problem of adult

education, our research, our looking back, will be properly grounded in ignorance and uncertainty. If it wasn't such a collosal understatement, verging on a joke, I would be tempted to say: "well, we have a lot of work to do." The knowledge and practice base of adult education is the total knowledge and practice base of humanity.

In summation, education is the indispensible best means for humanity to become itself, i.e. come to be. The burden and dream of adult education is still the dream of Plato in The Meno and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in his Oration on the Dignity of Man that we come into the conditions for being ourselves. Humanity has been granted the gift of authorship to read and write the world. To put brackets around all social theatres and around all claims to be a self and to ask: What is to be learned here? What humanity comes forth? is the promise and the task of adult education. What better way is there to accept that task than to insist that we and others be self-educators? In that acceptance society is reborn.

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